

Miles shines as Wycombe just go down

by **MICHAEL KNOX.** Wycombe 0, Altrincham 1

LAST year's F.A. Trophy winners Altrincham gained a deserved victory on the last day of their reign, when they met a new-look Wycombe Wanderers side in a friendly at Loakes Park on Friday night.

The next day Altrincham players went to Wembley to see Stafford Rangers beat Kettering 2-0 and take over their crown but at least they had the consolation of going out with a win, however insignificant.

In truth the result of Friday's friendly was not that important. More interesting from the Wanderers point of view were the performances of several new players being tried out.

The most experienced of them was the much travelled striker John Murray, who can name Reading and Brentford among his Football League clubs. Although not match fit, he showed a few glimpses of class but will have to be seen again before any firm judgement is made.

Paul Miles, a Reading Reserves forward, had the best game of the newcomers. Aged only 18, he showed an astute football brain and shielded the ball particularly well under pressure. He could be one worth persevering with.

Other youngsters Andy Hunt and Bob Parsons had only about 20 minutes each in the second half to prove their worth. It is difficult to judge on such a small viewing but Parsons showed up well with some neat first time passes.

Accident

Manager Andy Williams was disappointed that another teenager, Sean Price, could not make it. The young defender was involved in a road accident and although not injured, was unable to play.

Wycombe were a little short of defenders. With Bobby Davies having retired

and Steve Hardwick away, utility man Les Reed had to be drafted into the right back position.

The man he turned out to be marking was the former Stockport County player Barry Howard, a tricky little winger who caused all sorts of problems to Wycombe's makeshift defence throughout the game.

Howard had a golden chance to give the north-ers the lead in the 20th minute, but he shot wide after a dazzling move down the left had split the defence wide open.

With John Davison holding sway in the middle of the field, Altrincham moved forward impressively during the first half. A great ball by Davison put leading scorer John Rogers through with a clear shot but he fired wide.

But Rogers soon made amends by scoring the only goal of the match in the 29th minute. He netted with a fierce 20 yard shot into the roof of the net after Wycombe had failed to clear the danger of another Altrincham attack.

Wycombe's best shot of

the half came from Murray, who just missed the target after controlling a pass from Howard Kennedy.

The Blues enjoyed more of the game after the interval. Terry Scott, playing in the unaccustomed position in mid-field, fired just wide while Kennedy saw an effort tipped round a post after Murray had put Reed away down the right.

Wycombe put on the pressure in the closing stage but never really looked like penetrating the solid Altrincham defence, dominated by their talented centre-half Malcolm Bailey.

Mr Williams clearly must strengthen his forward line before the start of next season. Let's hope he can find the answers — one could be Paul Miles.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; L. Reed, P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, T. Scott, S. Atkins, P. Miles, J. Murray, H. Kennedy, M. Hollifield. Subs: C. Way (for Maskell 45 mins), A. Hunt (for Atkins 45), R. Parsons (for Hunt 69).

ALTRINCHAM: C. Darcy (sub: T. Cavanagh 70), D. Mobley, M. Brooke, G. Tobin, M. Bailey, A. Heathcote, I. Crisley, G. Heathcote, J. Rogers, B. Howard, J. Davison.

Referee: W. Cleere (High Wycombe).
Half-time 0-1. **Scorer:** Altrincham — Rogers (29 mins.)

'Support us' call to fans

WYCOMBE secretary John Goldsworthy has reacted strongly to comments in last week's Midweek that the supporters will only watch a championship chasing side.

Writing in Friday's match programme Mr Goldsworthy said, "If you are a supporter of a club then support it. Of course you hope and try to win but you cannot win them all. What is needed, more than anything else, is encouragement and constructive criticism."

In answer to the comment that Wycombe Wanderers are at the crossroads Mr Goldsworthy said "To me it is not the Football Club that are at the crossroads — we know what we are trying to do and have our guidelines clearly set.

"It is the footballing public of the town who are at the crossroads. It is they who have got to make up their minds whether they want top class non-league football at Wycombe or not.

"It is easy to support a winning team, the testing time comes when the team is not doing quite so well. So let everyone in the town, including industry, commerce and the media support and encourage what the club is trying to do — achieve success.